

Message Text

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43

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TO USLO PEKING

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CH, TPHY

SUBJECT: SMITHSONIAN: TIENTSIN EARTHQUAKE PREDICTION

REFS: A) PEKING 394

B) STATE 050719

C) PEKING 429

1. SMITHSONIAN WASHINGTON NOW HAS TEXT OF REPORT CITED IN REFTEL (B) AND FINDS THAT ORIGIN IS FEBRUARY 28 FRENCH PRESS AGENCY (AFP) PEKING WHICH GIVES AS SOURCE FEBRUARY 26 RADIO TIENTSIN BROADCAST. AFP REPORT TRANSMITTED TO CENTER FOR SHORT-LIVED PHENOMENA BY FBIS OKINAWA 1054Z FEBRUARY 28.

2. FBIS REPORTS IT DID NOT MONITOR RADIO TIENTSIN BROADCAST. TEXT OF FEBRUARY 28 FBIS MESSAGE FOLLOWS: AFP REPORTS PRC AUTHORITIES FEAR EARTHQUAKE WILL HIT TIENTSIN OW281054 HONG KONG AFP IN ENGLISH 1009 GMT 28 FEBRUARY 75 OW (BY SERGE ROMENSKY) (TEXT) PEKING, FEB 28 (AFP)--THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES APPEAR TO FEAR THAT AN EARTHQUAKE COULD POSSIBLY HIT THE DENSELY-POPULATED INDUSTRIAL CITY
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OF TIENTSIN AND ITS REGION SHORTLY. THIS PORT CITY, 120

KILOMETERS (81 MILES) SOUTHEAST OF HERE, IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST IN CHINA AND THE HOME OF 4 MILLION PERSONS. ON WEDNESDAY RADIO TIENTSIN BROADCAST A PROGRAMME WHICH

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DESCRIBED SIGNS WHICH COULD FORESHADOW AN EARTHQUAKE. FOREIGN SOURCES HERE SAID THAT POSTERS HAD BEEN STUCK UP IN THE CITY'S STREETS AIMED AT ORGANIZING THE PEOPLE INTO EARTHQUAKE-WATCHING GROUPS GEARED TO KEEP A LOOKOUT FOR THESE INDICATORS. ON FEBRUARY 4 A VIOLENT EARTHQUAKE STRUCK IN LIAONING PROVINCE. IN NORTHWEST CHINA BETWEEN THE TOWNS OF SHENYANG AND LUTA (FORMERLY MUKDEN AND DAIREN). SERIOUS DAMAGE WAS CAUSED BY THE EARTHQUAKE AND THERE WAS ALSO LOSS OF LIFE. THE NUMBER OF VICTIMS WAS NOT DISCLOSED. THIS EARTHQUAKE STRUCK ON THE EDGE OF THE PO HAI GULF. THE HAI HO RIVER, WHICH FLOWS THROUGH TIENTSIN, HAS ITS OUTLET IN THIS GULF 400 KILOMETERS (272 MILES) SOUTH OF THE FEB 4 EARTHQUAKE ZONE. THE PO HAI GULF AREA WAS HIT BY A STRONG EARTHQUAKE IN 1969. RADIO TIENTSIN REPORTED AT THE TIME THE LOCAL MUNICIPAL EARTHQUAKE BUREAU WAS ALERTED, SHORTLY BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE BY ZOO EMPLOYEES. THEY HAD NOTED THAT "THE PANDA WAS HOLDING HIS HEAD AND SHRIEKING" AND THAT SWANS HAD LEFT THE WATER. THE RADIO SAID THAT OTHER EARTHQUAKE HARBINGERS WERE BRUSQUE ALTERATIONS IN THE LEVEL OF WATER WELLS AND ALSO CHANGES IN WELL-WATER TEMPERATURE AND FLAVOUR. FURTHER FOREWARNINGS WERE UNDERGROUND RUMBLINGS SIMILAR TO THUNDER OR THE SOUND OF A TRACTOR'S CATERPILLAR TRACKS. SOMETIMES, THE RADIO ADDED, MYSTERIOUS FLASHES SEEMED TO COME FROM THE EARTH. GENERALLY OF RED OR BLUE COLOUR THESE FLASHES TOOK BIZARRE SHAPES SUCH AS THE FORM OF A COLUMN OR A BALL. THE RADIO HAS NOT SAID IF SIMILAR SIGNS OF THIS TYPE HAD BEEN NOTICED AT THE PRESENT TIME IN THE REGION. RUMOURS HERE SAID THAT BEFORE THE FEB 4 EARTHQUAKE AT LIAONING, ANIMALS IN HIBERNATION AWOKE, EMERGED FROM THEIR RETREATS AND WERE FROZEN TO DEATH. ALSO THE LEVEL OF WATER IN LOCAL WELLS ROSE WITHOUT ANY REASON. END TEXT

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3. REFTTEL (C) MAKES IT SEEM LIKELY THAT WHAT ROMENSKY OR HIS SOURCE HEARD WAS PROBABLY ONLY ONE OF A SERIES OF TIENTSIN BROADCASTS. THE KINDS OF PRECURSORY PHENOMENA WHICH ROMENSKY DESCRIBES ARE THE SORT OF THING WHICH AMERICAN SEISMOLOGY DELEGATION WAS TOLD AMATEUR OBSERVERS IN PRC ARE TOLD TO LOOK FOR AS PART OF OVERALL PREDICTIVE EFFORT. INGERSOLL

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